

R E M A R K S

To place this application in allowable condition, appropriate amendments to the claims have been made. Specifically, claim 1 has been amended to recite *inter alia* that the structure is configured for permanently covering the structure. Independent claim 11 has been amended to recite *inter alia* that the bumper cross-member has a U-shaped cross-section. Claim 12 has been amended to recite *inter alia* that the bumper cross-member comprises a front wall having a plurality of shock absorbers having egg-shaped bulges. Claim 13 has been amended to recite *inter alia* that the projecting portion is situated in a lowermost part of the structure and that the front ends are situated in a common substantially vertical plane. New independent claims 14 and 15 are claims 9 and 10 rewritten in independent form and previously indicated to contain allowable subject matter.

While the Examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 6, 7, and 8 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takeuchi (US 5,780,125), amended claim 1 now recites *inter alia*: "...said shielding skin...permanently covering the structure...". It is respectfully submitted that Takeuchi does not disclose nor suggest a shielding skin permanently covering the structure. The Examiner has considered that the white plastics material on new cars would constitute a shielding skin. Said white plastics material cited by the Examiner is intended to be removed and is in fact removed after delivery of the vehicle to the dealer. Accordingly, said white plastics material does not permanently cover the structure. Thus, the example given by the Examiner does not overcome the

deficiencies of the Takeuchi reference, which cannot and does not anticipate the present invention as defined in claim 1.

While the Examiner has rejected claims 11 and 12 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Macauley (US Design Patent 152,010) and under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Macauley in view of Takeuchi, amended claim 11 recites *inter alia*: "...at least one bumper cross-member having a U-shaped cross-section with a top face, a plurality of reinforcing ribs on said top face extending parallel to the direction of compression in the event of a front impact...". Macauley discloses a grille and bumper assembly. However, Macauley does not disclose nor suggest a bumper cross-section having a U-shaped cross-section with a top face and a plurality of reinforcing ribs on said top face. Thus, Macauley cannot anticipate the present invention as recited in claim 11. The Takeuchi reference discloses a bumper, said bumper having no reinforcing ribs on a top face extending parallel to the direction of compression in the event of a front impact. Accordingly, the Takeuchi reference does not overcome the deficiencies of Macauley. Moreover, even if Macauley were combined with Takeuchi, they cannot and do not anticipate the present invention as defined in claim 11.

Amended claim 12 recites *inter alia*: "...at least one bumper cross-member comprising a front wall having a plurality of shock absorbers having egg-shaped bulges,...". Macauley discloses a grille and bumper assembly having two vertical front elements separated from each other. Macauley does

not disclose nor suggest a bumper cross-member comprising a front wall having a plurality of shock absorbers having egg-shaped bulges. Thus Macauley cannot anticipate the present invention as defined in claim 12.

The Takeuchi reference does not disclose nor suggest shock absorbers having egg-shaped bulges. Thus, Takeuchi cannot remedy the deficiencies of Macauley. Macauley, even in combination with Takeuchi, cannot and does not anticipate the present invention as recited in claim 12.

While the Examiner has rejected claim 13 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Takeuchi, amended claim 13 recites *inter alia*: "...said projecting portion situated in a lowermost part of the structure, said bumper cross-member and said portion projecting from the front of the vehicle and having front ends which are shifted in a common substantially vertical plane". With reference to Fig. 3, Takeuchi does not disclose nor suggest a projecting portion situated in a lowermost part of the structure, said portion and the bumper cross-member having front ends which are situated in a common substantially vertical plane. With further reference to Fig. 3 of Takeuchi, the lowermost portion and the portion of the structure above the grille (8) are not situated in a common substantially vertical plane. Thus, Takeuchi cannot and does not anticipate the present invention as recited in claim 13.

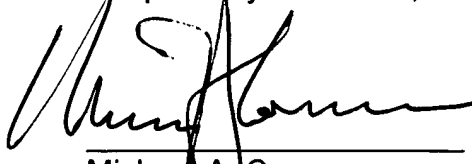
With reference to the certified copy of FR 9908690, it was in fact filed on October 12, 2000, as evidenced by the USPTO receipt, a copy of which is annexed hereto.

In view of the correction of the drawings, including the shielding skin in all views, and the amendment of the claims, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. An early notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the date indicated below.

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